

## Our Team



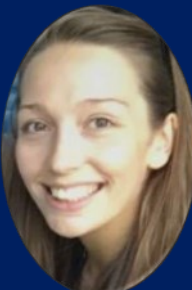
Mary Walters



Rhian Matthews



Clive Moynan



Morgan Richards



Tom Searle

## Living And Working In Your Community

February 2019

Hello and welcome to February. It's most definitely winter now!

Tom has been busy with his lambing course—he has done two dates, fully booked, very successful. I hope that everyone who has been has learned a lot. Some of our clients have already finished lambing—we have really enjoyed helping you.

We have a new product to help ewes with twin lamb disease—'Pep-up', a combination of calcium, energy and cobalt. Along with Metacam at a dose rate of 1ml/20kg under the skin, no ewe should go without! Metacam is indicated in so many instances—it is a painkiller and anti-inflammatory, and anything that makes a ewe feel better, keep eating and producing milk has got to be good.

Russell continues his series on heifer rearing this month—don't forget how helpful and economically viable calf coats are, and don't forget to increase milk intake—calves use a lot of energy keeping warm and this eats into their energy budget for growth at a time of maximum feed conversion—cold calves cost money.

You will notice a new voice on the phone this month—Tracey Huntley joins us two afternoons a week. She has a farming background and has worked in a vet practice previously as well.

Hope you all stay warm, fingers crossed for no more of the white stuff.

Mary

### Colostrum

Quantity, quality, quickly, quietly. Although this may look like a page from the dictionary, it is really the list of considerations when feeding colostrum to a calf.

Colostrum management is the first step in successfully rearing a heifer replacement, or any other calf. A key role of colostrum is to provide the new-born calf with antibodies to protect against infection. Calves receiving insufficient colostrum are considered to have **failure of passive transfer (FPT)**, which increases the risk of disease by 30%, whilst the risk of the calf dying more than doubles. Around one-third of calf deaths under 3 weeks old can be directly attributed to FPT.

Estimates for FPT are between 12% and 41% of calves tested, which puts a large number of calves every year at increased risk of disease. So, what factors exist that can reduce the number of calves affected by FPT?

#### Quantity

Calves should receive 10% of their bodyweight, or as close to this as possible, at their first feed. For most dairy calves this is between 3.5 and 4 litres. This is far more than a calf is likely to take voluntarily, as a calf takes 8-10 minutes of **continuous sucking** in order to drink 1 litre of colostrum.

Don't forget that colostrum contains much more than antibodies. The high fat and protein levels provide vital energy for new-born calves, particularly during winter, and there are various vitamins and minerals vital for the calf's adaptation to its new environment.





Sian Fuller



Russell Fuller



Rachel Davies



Sian Lloyd



Helen Dando



Tracey Huntley

### Quality

Having high quality colostrum increases the chance of the calf receiving adequate protection. Two key factors affect colostrum quality – how soon after calving it is collected, and how cleanly it is collected. Contrary to popular belief, a cow’s age does not affect her colostrum quality.

As soon as a cow calves, she will stop producing colostrum and switch over to producing milk. This dilutes the antibodies, meaning that colostrum quality is halved 12 hours after calving. Also, collection of colostrum needs to be as clean as possible, as it is known that bacterial contamination reduces antibody absorption.

Bacterial load can be further reduced by pasteurisation of colostrum, which increases calf antibody levels, with a corresponding 25% reduction in disease incidence.

### Quickly

The first feed of colostrum needs to be given as soon as possible after birth, at least within the first 2 hours, and a further feed of colostrum (5 to 10% of bodyweight) should be fed 6-12 hours after birth. The speed with which colostrum is fed directly affects calf antibody levels, as the calf’s gut begins to lose the ability to absorb antibody 4 hours after birth, and is unable to absorb antibody after 24 hours.

### Quietly

Colostrum feeding definitely needs to be stress free for the calf, and preferably for the farmer. When calves are subjected to excess stress, which includes being born into a cold, wet, draughty shed, closure of the gut to antibody is accelerated, which decreases absorption.

In order to assess the farm’s performance in providing colostrum for calves, it is necessary to **measure**. After this, changes can be made, and measurements re-taken to ensure changes have been successful. So, what can be measured?

First things first, it is sensible to measure how many calves are getting enough colostrum. This is done by taking a blood sample from calves 1 to 10 days old, which is then checked for protein content. This is done in-house, meaning that results are available the same day, meaning necessary changes can be made quickly.

Second, it is easy to measure colostrum quality fresh from the cow. This is done using a Brix refractometer (ask any brewer), which measures how many solids, and therefore antibodies are present. A value above 23% suggests good quality colostrum, suitable for a first feed. However, lower quality colostrum can be used for second and subsequent feeds, as the antibodies will still work inside the gut, and the high energy and protein levels are still of value to the calf.



Brix refractometer

These tests are easy to carry out, with rapid results, which are vital in new-born calf health. If you are interested, speak to one of the vets, even if it’s “while you’re here” and they will get you started on measuring and monitoring colostrum intakes.

### **Cows On Tour**

A group of farmers, under the project name ‘Cows on Tour’, are continuing in their efforts to promote British farming. A lot of their activities have involved educating the younger generation. Their latest mission is to climb Snowdon. This will take place on Saturday May 4th. They are looking for volunteers who feel up to the climb as well as donations to help the cause.

For further information contact Abi Reader on: 07949204225.



South Wales Farm Vets

Ty Newydd

Groes Faen

CF72 8NE

Tel: 01443 223751

## Recent Events

### Lambing Course

Tom has run a number of lambing courses recently which have had a practical focus.

Uptake has been excellent - well done Tom on some great organisation.

We would love to hear feedback from any participants as well as suggestions for future courses or talks.

Good luck for lambing using your newfound skills.

### Pep Up

Twin lamb drench now available from the practice, containing calcium, energy and cobalt.

Available in 3 sizes:

500ml - £10 +VAT

2L - £30 +VAT



## Tracey Huntley - Receptionist

Tracey is a farmer's wife living on a hill farm near Pontypridd, married to Jonathan, they have 3 children Thomas, Ffion and Rhianne. Tracey has previous experience working as a veterinary receptionist at Capron Vets in Pontypridd. She is very much involved with the day to day running of the family business and enjoys being outside and working with the stock on the farm.



## Ewe Nutrition and Metabolic Profiling

The nutritional status of a ewe in the last trimester of pregnancy is vital. It is during this period the foetus does the majority of its growth and also when the ewe undergoes mammary development. The ewe therefore has a high demand for protein, calcium and importantly energy. Meeting these requirements will aid foetal development, colostrum/milk quantity and quality, as well as decreasing the risk of pregnancy toxemia (twin lamb disease) and hypocalcaemia.

The following can help increase the likelihood of meeting a ewe's nutritional requirements:

- Checking the body condition score of ewes pre-tupping will weed out those not able to maintain a pregnancy. Monitoring ewe body condition throughout the pregnancy can aid identification and intervention for those animals whose nutritional demands are not being met.
- Scanning ewes and determining foetal number will aid decision making on supplementary feeding. For example a single bearing ewe's requirements will likely be met on forage alone while multiples will need additional concentrate feeding.
- We can help by blood sampling ewes 3-6 weeks before lambing to obtain a metabolic profile. This will assess the ewe's energy and protein status, giving accurate and farm specific advice on their nutrition. This will allow sufficient time to make any dietary changes before lambing.

Please contact us at the surgery to discuss further.



## Lungworm control

As we look out the window at the current weather, it seems a little premature to be discussing worm control but when using Huskvac vaccine for lungworm prevention it is best to plan ahead. This is because youngstock must complete the vaccine course 2 weeks prior to turnout and require 2 doses approximately 4 weeks apart.

Lungworm can cause a reduction in yield in milking cows, coughing, increased respiratory rate and effort. Severely affected animals may be reluctant to move, stand with their head down and neck extended, cough frequently and will possibly die.

Huskvac is an oral vaccine given to stimulate immunity before exposure to lungworm during the grazing season. This can reduce the need for anthelmintic treatment and so is ideal for organic herds.

